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ABSTRACT

Contemporary demographic, economic, political, and social changes in Europe are influencing cultural and educational processes. International migration, internal migration from rural to urban centers, emergence of the welfare state, professionalization of society, technological advancement, and changes in occupational structure and the situation of women are impacting on family and working life and the standard of living/quality of life. A decontextualising of social life has occurred. Involved in the transition to new modes are the dehistorication of history, the lack of predictability, the consequences of "homelessness," the collapse of working-class culture, change in identity formation, emergence of the youth culture, structural paralysis, and "handing-over" of life decisions to professionals. The extraordinary complexity of these changes forces a reconsideration of educational and cultural policies. Standardized solutions must be reconciled to the variety in the local communities by changes in educational and cultural authority structures, thinking processes, and personnel training. The educational system should be "grounded" to everyday life, particularly language teaching to immigrants, and should provide opportunities for a wide range of multicultural exchanges. Those defining and implementing cultural and educational policies must recognize the creative forces at play and provide opportunities for them to become sources of unity and cooperation. (NEC)

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The CDCC's Project N° 7

"The education and cultural development of migrants"

FOR BETTER OR WORSE

Contemporary Social, Cultural and Economic Changes in Europe and their Significance for Cultural and Educational Policies

by

Yngve Georg LITHMAN

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INTRODUCTION

This essay attempts to deal with a large number of issues in a very limited space. Its purpose, hence, is rather to point to areas of interest, raise issues, sensitise the reader and provoke discussion. It is less my intention to present comprehensive arguments. This is not only an adaptation to necessities. It is also an expression of the recognition that given the diversity to which this essay addresses itself - geographical, demographic, social, cultural, political - it would be futile to attempt to promote an image of a Europe "out there", the relevent aspects of which are possible to describe in a limited space and made to provide the basis for unshakeable recommendations. Hopefully, this essay will point to some of the main trends in contemporary Europe, and demonstrate in what manner these are part of or will influence cultural and educational processes. This will also make it possible to discern, at least in some instances, strategically important areas of policy-making, and the effects various policy measures will have.

So, instead of conjuring up an ill-founded image of a reality "out there" which is possible to neatly define through the vehicle of a social scientist's essay, this endeavour has the somewhat more ambitious goal of identifying trends and social processes, of showing modes whereby they can be analysed and how their relationship to cultural and educational phenomena and policies can be understood. It might, perhaps, be claimed that this essay represents an attempt to provide a language which will make it possible to relate large-scale events, "the macro level", to what goes on in schools, in peoples' leisure time, in families, wherever people act together and communicate about their lives and their desires, the "micro level".

The essay is structured in three parts. The first describes some of the contemporary large-scale processes of change taking place in Europe. Special attention is directed to certain areas. These include demographic patterns and migration, work life and the family but reasoning on a more societal level is also included. Here eg the emergence of the welfare state and significant changes in work organisation are discussed. The second part of the essay attempts to pinpoint some of the implications of these changes, and social, cultural as well as educational issues are dealt with. The essay concludes with more concrete proposals for actions which could eliminate the negative consequences of contemporary changes.

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I. THE PRESENT SITUATION

Here, some of the main trends in contemporary Europe with respect to social and cultural changes will be described. The focus will be on a number of issues, but only occasionally will the interrelationship between these issues be given particular attention. The purpose, after all, is not to develop a theory of social change in Europe, but to direct attention to those matters which have, or should have, a significant impact in the cultural and educational fields.

I.1 International migration

One of the recurrent themes in the history of mankind is that people have migrated. The very substantial European post-war migration is thus to be seen as yet one manifestation of a man-old phenomenon. The largest flow has been within Europe. Countries like Yugoslavia, Greece, Portugal and Turkey have been some of the main countries of origin, while the northern European industrial countries like the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden have been "typical" countries of reception. Blended in with this more clear-cut economically based and labour-market oriented migration, we do, however, also find migratory streams which eg have to be understood in the context of the demise of empires and decolonisation. Here, countries, like the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands have received a substantial number of immigrants from former colonies in eg North Africa, Central Asia and the Far East, respectively.

It is, however, to some extent misleading to suggest that there is a clear-cut division between those countries from which people migrate and those to which they come. In fact, we find that most countries are, to varying degrees, both sending and receiving countries. For example, Italy has a very substantial number of immigrants occupied in agricultural pursuits, and Portugal has a substantial immigrant population from previous colonies.

Yet one fact which is seldom sufficiently noted is that a significant part of the present migration to European countries is represented by refugees from the developing countries. Political upheavals and wars in countries like Vietnam, Uganda and Bangladesh have resulted in refugees arriving in Europe, and this type of movements are indeed likely to continue, if not increase.

International migration and its various effects on the countries of origin and the countries of reception as well as the fate of the immigrants has provoked growing research in Europe. International bodies such as the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) have stimulated inquiries, and the OECD SOPEMI (Système d'Observation Permanente du Migration) provides a yearly overview of the international migration for several European countries, the United States and Canada.

I.2 Internal migration

International migration has received considerable attention in many instances, but when discussing population movements, it is of the utmost importance to recognise that there has been a very substantial internal migration in all the member countries of the Council of Europe. This internal migration is one visible aspect of the profound changes affecting our countries. We have a reduction of the number of people employed in agricultural pursuits, resulting in a move from the country to towns and cities. We have a dramatic technological shift in many resource-extracting enterprises, such as mines and forestry, resulting in a situation where a fraction of the number of people previously employed through the use of sophisticated technology can produce far more than was possible earlier. We also have the restructuring of whole industrial sectors, such as coal mining, steel and ship-building, where large numbers of towns and cities, many of which were perhaps built around these industries, lose their economic viability.

For many countries belonging to the Council of Europe, similar economic processes have been at play ever since industrialisation, and many economists would indeed argue that they are integral parts of market-oriented economies. It should also be added that, on the whole, up to and including the 1960s, most people who could not find work in the local area had a fair chance of being absorbed in expanding labour markets, usually in city areas.

The massive influx of people from abroad or from the countryside to cities which has been manifest for the better part of the post-war period has had numerous consequences, and some of these will be discussed below. One, however, should be mentioned here: the massive housing developments which have taken place around any city of significance. All over Europe, we find the high-rise or semi-high-rise concrete housing complexes surrounding a centre with stores, a subway station, and commuter buses.

I.3 Towards the welfare state

The face of the state too has changed dramatically during the post-war era. Many of the changes are perhaps best discussed within the concept of the welfare state.

The change which underpins the emergence of the welfare state ethos is, in a sense, a shift towards a maximalistic definition of the responsibilities of the state. This means, argue Fox, Aull and Cimino (1981), that the "ever more powerful welfare state expands regulation into all aspects of economic, political and social life". This is accompanied by "a reduction in economic class conflicts and an increase in managerial (rather than political) approaches to social problems".

The expansion of the welfare state has a number of important underpinnings. (I will not discuss here the general issue of the growth of governmental involvement in matters such as the economy or large-scale industrial enterprises; it is certainly related to the things I will bring up, but still somewhat peripheral to my argument.) One is, of course, the

introduction of large-scale transfer systems, which started as a means of subsistence for impoverished people, including low-income families and the aged, and which more and more has become the expression of a general sentiment that everybody is entitled to a fair standard of living.

Another underpinning is not only a "managerial" orientation, but a firm political and widely held conception that social problems are fundamentally soluble through governmental interference. This engineering-type of approach to social problem issues has consequences for the definition of what areas the government may legitimately get involved in. If social problems are thought addressable through managerial, ie expert, involvement, this means that all areas where an expertise can be developed are open to governmentally-sponsored experts.

I.4 Professionalisation

Here we touch upon the issue of "professionalisation". One of the prominent features of present-day society has been the emergence of a large number of professions, and a concomitant definition of new areas to be handled through professionals. By professions, one would usually mean occupational groups having a specific education and a monopoly on a certain pursuit. Certification, a degree of self-regulation and ethical codes are other parts of the professions. Psychologists, also in more finely divided entities such as school psychologists, and social workers are two occupational groups who have joined, or attempted to join, the growing cadres of professionals.

The growth of "professionalism" is but one reflection of a "technologisation of knowledge". Crudely expressed, this technologisation of knowledge has as one prime feature a kind of reductionist ambition: the problem, as it were, is identified, it is conceptually related to some "model" which is part of the professionals' tool-box for "explaining" the problem, and this model states what has "caused" the problem. Thereby, it is also possible to prescribe the proper remedies. The elegance of this cause-effect reasoning has a strong resemblance to natural science or medical discourse, but its dangers in the complex fields of social affairs and inter-personal relationships are obvious and numerous. The presumption that people's actions are predictable to the extent that the approach suggests is highly debatable. Its models, and hence its prescriptions for remedies, are based upon the perspectives advanced in one type of training or one university discipline, and seldom give expression to the fact that several perspectives may be legitimately applied to a specific situation. An illustration of this can be where an individual's problematic situation can be explained both from a micro perspective, where the individual's own background and shortcomings are prominent, and from a macro perspective, where a particular societal situation can be seen as determining an individual's situation and the problems he or she will have to confront. By and large, the professions will tend to focus on the micro level. This confirms, that to the professions, knowledge is technology rather than insight into a social process.

Another danger in the professionalisation of society is that people feel that problems, or even a variety of matters belonging to the stream of life where we have to make decisions every day, are not "theirs" to handle. Child care and the organisation of family life are but two examples of where a division often has emerged between what the professionals define as proper modes of action and what people pursue as traditionally-based and experience-derived common sense.

I.5 Occupational structure and working life

The whole area of working life is undergoing rapid change in all European countries. Although it would be misleading to suggest too great a uniformity between the changes in various countries, it is still possible to pinpoint some fairly general trends.

The labour market expansion which has been witnessed during the sixties and, in particular, during the seventies, has more and more related to the activities in the public sector. Industrial employment of the traditional type as well as employment in primary resource extracting have been responsible for a decreasing share of the new jobs. The expansion in hospital services, old age care, education, day care, social services are all examples of activities which have created new labour opportunities and also contributed to a reshaping of the occupational structure.

One of the most significant items attending these changes is that women have found employment in the expanding sectors of the economy. The labour participation rates of women have risen, sometimes dramatically, but it should be noted that in many countries, women feel that they have to choose between having children or being part of the work force (considerable differences between different classes in society seem to exist here, however). In some countries, part-time work and other arrangements make it more possible for women to combine family and work.

It is of considerable interest to note that there appears to be a fairly unanimous opinion among most observers about some of the future trends in the European labour market. Both quality concerns and the relative price of labour points in the direction of rapid robotisation in industry. This will also entail a greater production per employee, and few predict a noticeable increase in overall industrial employment, at least as far as more unskilled personnel is concerned. International competition, also from the newly industrialised countries (NIC), is a heavily determining factor here. At the same time, it is unlikely that the public sector in many countries will see an increase in employment. The consequences of what is sometimes perceived as the oil crises during the seventies, and which some argue simply revealed weaknesses in our societies which had been built into them during the last decades, have been deficits in the national accounts for most countries. These deficits, through a number of mechanisms including the costly management of foreign debts, are seen as prohibiting an expansion of the public sector and thus increased employment opportunities. We are faced, it is argued, with a residual unemployment which makes a political goal of full employment (however defined) a mirage.

The present youth unemployment is sometimes given to illustrate these changes in the economy and the labour market. However, it may well be argued that here too we witness the result of other factors. One of these is the increasing skill levels requested by employers of new employees, and where poorly educated youth face rejection. Another may be a shift in the entrance mechanisms to the labour market where temporary unqualified jobs, which traditionally provided entrance to some of the unqualified youth, have now disappeared.

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that the depressed labour market situation is solely the result of new factors lodged in the economy or the labour market itself. There are numerous areas in Europe where we can witness a high unemployment due to the closure of plants and mines or a reduction in their number of employees. Sometimes indeed, we find whole regions affected in this way. A variety of factors have to be taken into consideration when an attempt is made to account for the resulting unemployment: for example there is no substantial reason for the unemployed to believe that any internal or international migration (where eg the free Nordic and the EEC labour market agreements have removed many of the institutional obstacles) will result in employment. Likewise, it has often been a political necessity to give support to the people in these areas, both with the aim of job creation and for welfare purposes. In large measure, however, we are witnessing the emergence of unemployment areas, where unemployment is increasingly becoming a way of life. Although this phenomenon to some extent has long been in existence in some agriculturally dominated areas, we are still witnessing a novelty with respect to prevalence and geographical spread.

I.6 Technological changes

One technological change has already been touched upon, robotisation. However, a more general discussion about future technological changes and their consequences for the labour force has to have another starting point. When examining technological change, one has to recognise two dimensions. On the one hand, we have the technological changes within each labour market sector. Here, we find an increasing sophistication within each sector. On the other, the various sectors start from very different degrees of sophistication. An appreciation of what the technological changes will entail for the labour force therefore necessarily has to take the relative future weight of the various sectors as employers into account.

The rapid developments in the manufacturing branches have already been mentioned. In the service fields, and also in as yet fairly unsophisticated parts of the public sector, we will undoubtedly see rapid future changes in the same directions as in industry. This will most likely rapidly affect large parts of what has been called the "pink proletariat", traditionally relatively unsophisticated jobs, often in offices, mainly manned by women. "Office automatisation", where microprocessors will play a large part, will require new skill levels on the part of the employees. It will also, although there is considerable disagreement here, enhance the responsibilities on the part of each employee, as much mundane and routine work will disappear.

Whether the innovations also will entail a shrinking labour force, as many argue, is far less certain. There are indeed many good reasons to believe that there is an at least equal growth in existence, relating to a demand for higher quality, more demanding reporting systems, and the like.

Many of the most significant technological changes related directly to the information storing and processing techniques which have been made possible through microprocessors and computers. We are even, albeit at least as yet on a small scale, witnessing a slight rebirth of something which resembles a kind of proletarised cottage industry. The distributed computer systems makes it possible to contract out tasks such as word processing to self-employed individuals (women). There might well be a rapid growth in this type of enterprise.

The technological penetration also in occupations which as yet have been regarded as fairly unsophisticated will of course have profound effects upon one of the central mechanisms in a modern industrial state, that through which individuals gain entrance into the labour market. Persons who in their education have received a preparation for work with microprocessors and computers will have an edge also when competing for jobs which are as yet regarded as technologically undemanding.

This discussion has had a focus in the relationship between technology and the labour force. This is defensible in view of the purpose of this essay. It should, however, be mentioned that very significant items have not been dealt with. The energy situation and emerging technologies in this field have highlighted the question of large-scale, versus "human", technology, and thus served as a battle-ground for different principles in the field of future technology. Environmental concerns have become a major issue in all of Europe. The threat of nuclear war has prompted a general discussion about the manageability of complex technological systems and the responsibilities of various sectors of society, researchers, politicians, and the public at large. These issues are all major parts of a general discussion of contemporary technology. Their most important lesson is perhaps that technological matters are not only technological, but also have a political and human dimension.

I.7 Changes in family life and the situation of women

It is important to distinguish between the changes that have taken place with respect to family life in Europe, and those which relate to the position of women. To a large extent, they are indeed inseparable, but it is also common to see their treatment together resulting in an argument that the changes in family life are a reflection of the changes in the position of women. This often appears to be an unwarranted neglect of those forces which can be seen as resulting in changes in both spheres. Their treatment together here should in some measure be seen as an attempt at economy in presentation.

The changes in family life in Europe are in many ways dramatic both with respect to content and speed. This can be seen in a number of quantitative measures. The average age for marriage has risen, not least for women,

and this indicates that an increasing numb of women strive for a completed education, and perhaps even establishment on the labour market before starting a family. The number of children in each family is decreasing, similarly perhaps indicating that a commitment to family as a way of life is getting less common. Divorces, not long ago frowned upon in many, if not all, European countries are now common to the extent that probably one half of all marriages entered upon today in a country like Sweden will be dissolved through divorce. A very substantial portion of the children, perhaps one half, born in the marriages entered into this year in the same country will have seen their parents divorced before they reach the age of 18.

We have also witnessed the emergence of new forms of cohabitation. Co-residence with one or several partners before marriage or childbirth is no longer uncommon. Nor is matrimony in many parts of Europe any longer seen as a virtual prerequisite for raising a family. Cohabitation and child-rearing without marriage has, indeed, become a fairly common practice, not least among fairly young people, especially in the more northern parts of Europe.

Are we simply witnessing an erosion of the impact of religion and a general withering of moral values, as some would argue? Or, as others hold, are we witnessing the reflections of deep-rooted societal changes, bringing both traumas and opportunities to people? The proponents of these two perspectives have engaged in what has been called "the war over the family" (cf Berger and Berger 1983).

Let us first of all establish that the "family" for many in this discussion has become a symbol of virtually all good things in life. It has then been important to create a history of the family that demonstrates that we are now witnessing abnormal and regrettable developments. However, we must conclude that many of the images of the family propounded have more to do with an idealisation rooted in upper-class bourgeois family self-historiography. A hundred years ago, the family as a societal institution was in terrible shape in large parts of Europe. To give but one example, in Sweden at that time, 75% of the women of marriageable age were unmarried and almost half of all children were born out of wedlock.

The strong symbolic value inherent in the concept of the family has then had a tendency to prohibit even the establishment of a factual basis upon which to base a discussion. A further complication of more recent origin has been that some of the arguments in favour of equality between the sexes have also contained the notion that to be "for" the family has, inter alia, meant to be "against" women. So, any criticism of the family is likely to be derided, not, perhaps, because the facts are wrong but because the symbolic power of the family concept means that any selection of facts is open to charges of improper representation of the true issues involved.

What can, then, be said about the changes in family life? Changes, some of which have been mentioned above, are occurring, and they are real enough. Likewise, these changes will have consequences.

One hotly-debated issue over the family relates to what can be called the decontextualisation of family life. By this I mean that the family loses a number of functions. For example, it is less and less of a production unit and the family is less and less maintained or supported by a lack of economic and other options outside the family for the members of the family (primarily, of course, the parents). Instead, family life has to be sustained in larger measure than before by the emotional and valuative commitments to it on the part of its members. And with respect to this issue, some have argued that this signals the eventual demise of the family, while others have argued that the liberation of the family from various economic and other pursuits have made it possible for the members of the family to raise the quality of the interaction between its members.

The reduced economic and other functions within the family is only one example of how changes in the society have affected family life. Related to this in differing degrees, is the emergence of economic support systems which in some sense function to lessen the dependence on the part of the individuals on the family. The social assistance systems, including health care and similar insurance systems, belong to this category, as do various economic educational support structures for youth and adults.

Tied in with these developments we find an increasing level of education on the part of women, and an increasing participation on the labour market. Women are becoming less and less dependent upon family life, or the maintenance of one particular family, to maintain themselves economically and for emotional gratification.

Coupled to these things, we also find a virtual revolution in family planning techniques during the last 20 years and a very considerable growth in child care systems.

One more important factor must be mentioned in the description of the changes in family life, the developments which have made it very difficult for an increasing number of families to maintain a standard of living which they find acceptable solely on the income from one provider. In some measure, this is a reflection of the fact that some of the "production" which women did within the home has been transferred to a market where it has to be purchased. A large part of it also relates to a rise in the material standard which has been possible not least through very efficient production techniques. All in all, we may well say that a capitalisation has occurred in family life, and that this capitalisation is attended by a rise in the material standard of living and in large measure necessitating a second income in the family if it is to take advantage of it. And, in fact, there is often no choice. A rent is a rent, modern home-making requires fridges and various utensils, the distance between home and work place makes travel costly, debts incurred for educational purposes have to be repaid, etc. In fact, it is increasingly becoming a necessity for a family to have two incomes, except, perhaps, for a very limited period when one or a couple of children are small. It should be noted, however, that in some countries, such as the Netherlands and Switzerland, it is not common that married women with children have work.

The changes in family life, including the increasing economic self-sufficiency of its members, also include the growing economic independence on the part of the young. This is in large measure a post-war phenomenon which appears to be of rapidly increasing significance. We find here one explanation of the emergence of youth culture. As the young have become more independent economically, it has also been possible for them to materially support their own spheres of cultural expression - a situation which has not gone unnoticed by the commercial sectors of society.

I.8 Standard of living and quality of life

What, then, have these changes brought in terms of standards of living? This is not an easy question to answer. One major problem to address when attempting to formulate an answer has to do with what should be included in standard of living.

One way of defining standard of living focuses on the resources which are at the disposal of an individual, and which the individual can consciously utilise to control his or her life. This to a large degree is a fairly traditional approach, and one which has inspired the search for a methodology of "social reporting". The concern here is primarily with such tangible resources as income, capital, housing and health care. For a considerable time, one has also attempted to include such more intangible concerns as working conditions, occupational hazards and "political resources". The attempts to refine this methodology has produced such a voluminous literature that the whole approach is sometimes referred to as "the social indicator movement".

These inquiries have produced significant statistical information on standards of living, but their shortcomings are also obvious. They do not do justice to the individual's perception of his or her situation, including what the individuals consider more or less important. In a critique of this approach to evaluating the situation of a population, the Finnish sociologist Allardt used the title "To have, to be, to love", thereby stressing that one certainly has to be concerned with the resources which an individual has at his or her disposal to reach instrumental goals when discussing standard of living, but equally with the ability to be recognised and respected in terms of an identity ("to be") and as both a subject and an object of affection ("to love").

An even more ambitious goal is evident in Dahrendorf's concept of "life chances", a concept which he sees possible to use to "express human wants and needs, interests and hope in a way that does not suppress the subjective element but makes it clear that one is seeking more than the personal sensation of happiness, namely, socially structured ways of individual life". What is new here is the introduction of a concept of social structure. More concretely, Dahrendorf advances the notion that life chances are a function of options and ligatures. Options are the alternatives of action in a social structure, manifesting themselves as choices to the individual.

Ligatures, on the personal level manifesting themselves as social bonds or link ges, represent the cohesive aspect of the social structure. Ligatures, thus, signifies meaning and the anchoring of persons and their actions.

Dahrendorf's reasoning leads to the insight that "a maximum of options is not by itself a maximum of life chances", and that "ligatures without options are oppressive, whereas options without bonds (are) meaningless".

If we look at the changes in Europe over the last decades, we find, of course, an often dramatic rise in the standard of living as defined by social indicators. The attempts to answer the more broadly based question how the quality of life has changed have been far less convincing. Often one suspects that what is provided are simply percentages purporting to show the degree to which people feel more or less happy. It has not been possible to relate the findings to features of the society and individual experiences (except in very mundane ways). This impasse, however, appears to be possible to overcome, at least in large measure, through the concept of life chances and the ways it can be elaborated. One of its main strengths lies in its ability to link socio-structural features to individuals' life careers and experiences of pleasure and pain.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT CHANGES

II.1 A general perspective

It is, of course, impossible to condense the implications of the recent changes in Europe into a few observations. Nevertheless, one might suggest that what can be called a decontextualising of social life has occurred, and that this can be seen as a contributing factor in many of the implications which can be delineated.

Social life can be described as people acting in contexts. These contexts can be seen as frames for action in the sense that they provide the participants in joint acts with guidelines for how to act. Viewed from this perspective, the contexts can be seen as infused with meaning for the participants, and also infusing meaning in the participants. The kind of contexts to which I refer can be labelled "family life", "working life", "village life", etc. These contexts can be seen as routinised forms of social interaction, from which people have derived a considerable amount of the "knowledge" about the world, about their role in it, about what things to value and what to discredit.

The recruitment to the contexts have been made according to fairly determined criteria. Co-residentiality, employment in the same factory, belonging to the same village, kinship, and similar principles have served to define both those who belong in a specific context and those who do not.

To revert to the terminology advanced in the discussion on standard of living, one might say that the life in contexts which I am here discussing have provided a considerable amount of Dahrendorf's ligatures.

If many of the changes which have occurred over Europe in the last decades may well be described as the loss of defined and meaningful contexts, also providing definition, meaning and direction to the individuals, what observable manifestations of this does one find? Differently put, although not entirely overlapping, what has taken the place of the contexts? And in what way has decontextualisation changed the structures of meaningfulness which people create in order to explain their situation, the purpose(s) of life, how to relate to each other in face-to-face encounters as well as their position within larger societal entities?

This line of inquiry, where one looks at what was and what has come instead, also has the advantage of avoiding the simplistic assumptions which have underpinned some of the discussion about urbanism. It has often been argued that urbanism represents a move from the solidarity in villages and other smaller-scale social entities to the anonymity, atomism and often anomic situation in the urban environment. This line of reasoning has been heavily attacked by other researchers, who have demonstrated that these findings are not at all very typical of urban life. What has happened instead, the argument goes, is that new forms of solidarity and co-operation emerge in the urban context.

The argument here is similar. We are witnessing a decontextualisation of social life, and new patterns of thought and action emerge. This change is not readily described simply as an atrophy in social life, but rather as a transition to new modes. What, then, can be said about these innovations? Some answers, impressionistic rather than analytically elaborated, will be given here.

II.1 The dehistorication of history

The contexts, as they have been defined above, carried heavily-laden symbols relating to the history of a group or a people, providing a "historical" explanation of the present situation. The various contexts in which an individual participated were tied together as differing expressions of one and a shared historical experience. Irrespectively of whether the history focused on genealogies, the cnanges that had passed over a region or on the development of a nation, or any combination of these, it served to place the individual in a stream of tradition. In a sense, the individual could experience him- or herself as a cog in a process that widely transcended the fate of any individual.

Viewed in this manner, the dehistorication may be seen as one facet of the privatisation of the individuals. It is one part of the process whereby the individual becomes the significant unit in a society.

II.2 The lack of predictability, and the consequences of "homelessness"

The term "homelessness" has become common through the work of Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973). They use the concept of "home" in a somewhat similar way to how the concept of context has been used above. One feature of modernisation, they argue, is that "the political and social structures have become outside the subjective understanding and control of individual persons" (Brittan 1977:46). Homelessness, then, relates to a feeling of being outside where decisions are made, where control over one's life career is lodged.

One highly important consequences of this may be that people have a very low opinion of their possibilities to predict the consequences of their choices, eg in the occupational sphere and in their attempts to guide their children into specific pursuits. The "world" is no longer something to be lived in or conquered, but is a "system" or a "society" which overpowers and overwhelms.

II.3 The collapse of working-class culture

One difficult phenomenon to circumscribe, but of considerable pertinence in the context of this essay, is what has sometimes been labelled the collapse of working-class culture. The concept of working-class culture might be a too uniform and singular label for a whole range of phenomena. However, the label does point to the existence of a working-class culture in the sense that "working class people" by virtue of their position in society, interaction and communication developed shared notions, shared evaluations and shared goals. One manifestation of this, of course, is to be found in the political organisations they have created. Others, however, relate to lifestyles, interaction and cognition.

The concept of culture also signals that we are here dealing with a phenomenon with a root in some measure of stability, both spatial and temporal. Although exhibiting profound differences in various countries, it has nevertheless been possible to demonstrate the existence of a working-class culture in widely different settings. Describing its content is more difficult in a limited space, but among its features are a belief in collective action as opposed to individual modes of vertical social mobility, a duty-oriented work ethic, an orientation towards certain leisure time activities (including soccer in many countries), certain arrangements in the domestic sphere, etc. The important thing here, however, is rather to point to the existence of a cultural make-up which, metaphorically, "carried" its members, and played a key role in providing orientation in the socialisation of children and youth.

The collapse of working-class culture relates, of course, to many things. Some of them relate to the vanishing of some of its requirements, the spatial and temporal stability. Migration and urbanisation are but two factors which have played a role here, as has been the increased schooling, whereby a far more intense exposure to middle-class values have been introduced to the youth. Mass media in general have been new sources of messages to the young, exhorting new values and lifestyles. The growing economic resources in the hands of teenagers and other youth, partly a reflection of the general increase in economic wellbeing, have made them less dependent upon the older generation, and have thereby also made it possible for them to achieve a greater social and cultural self-reliance.

These are some of the factors which have contributed to the collapse of the working-class culture, and thus also, to use Dahrendorf 's terminology, to the lessening or reduction of the "ligatures". The working class itself is of course a continuing feature of a modern, industrialised society.

II.4 Changes in identity formation

The changes which have passed over Europe, many of which have here been subsumed under the label of decontextualising, have had highly significant consequences for the ways in which identity-building takes place. Several of the significant sources for culture generally and thus identity-building have evaporated or at least become less important. The family, the local area and its traditions and working-class culture are some of these which have been treated above. Even one's own interpretation of what goes on in the world, and how it affects oneself - often regarded as one of the prime sources for the creation of an identity, a conception of who and what one is - is in a way denied its validity as identity-building material. Mass media and professionals often promulgate "truths" which many times run contrary to what many would regard as the conclusions they can draw from their own experiences. Sex roles and child upbringing are but two instances where this clash often occurs, many times serving to heighten a feeling of uncertainty. And one of the most significant features of this situation is that it can often not be mediated in the ways in which people usually attempt to resolve conflicting messages over how life should be lived and who one is - through discussions

with friends, relatives, neighbours, in short, people sharing the same culture. The problem, after all, consists to a large extent in the discrepancy between what is advanced in the immediate social relationships, among the people sharing one's own situation, and what appear as messages from prestigious media or powerful (and supposedly insightful) professionals.

This whole process whereby individuals' identity does indeed become, in larger measure than before, the identity of individuals, has sometimes been called the "privatisation of the world" (cf Brittan 1977). It has been analysed from the perspectives of modernisation, the market behaviour attending capitalism, and other large-scale historical processes. Whatever its causes on these high analytical levels, as an empirical phenomenon we find a Europe where individuals do indeed become more and more "individualised". Identities, by the same token, increasingly become expressions of the biographical selves.

That identities increasingly become expressions of biographical selves also involves another highly important feature. Our modern societies have developed into a situation where people usually only meet in highly specialised roles, seldom as "whole persons". As individuals, we usually only activate a fragment of ourselves in social interaction, as we seldom have reason to present ourselves as "totalities". Apparently, we here have one root of the discontent of our times, that people have a notion of societal constructs and social relationships where it is possible to live "wholly", but their own experiences are restricted to fragmented social life.

We are here, touching upon a prime source for the understanding of several phenomena in contemporary Europe, not least among youth. I am referring to what has been labelled "the expressive revolution", "counter-cultures" and "alternative lifestyles", but also many other instances of conscious efforts to create "alternatives", including ethnically based ones, to our present conditions. A somewhat different "solution" open to people is to submerge oneself in the current trends, and a substantial literature now exists about the "narcissistic" society and "consumerism".

II.5 Emerging cultural forms and youth culture

As the final part of the above discussions of identity revealed, the cultural processes which have been identified here have also led to emergence of new cultural forms. What many of these have in common is that they are in a sense representations of opposition ideologies. By this is meant that they derive their content mainly through a contrast to what is perceived as dominant trends in the "larger" society, ie its major modes of thinking and operation. Likewise, many of the emerging cultural forms strive for elaborated boundaries against the surrounding society.

One example of this is represented by a variety of cultural constellations which may be discussed together under the label of youth culture. Among its less dramatic expressions we find what is sometimes labelled "teenage culture".

This may be regarded as a vehicle for adolescents to define themselves as independent persons, and is heavily supported by commercial interests. At the other end of a continuum, we find youth cultures whose members define themselves in a much more clear-cut opposition to the surrounding society, and whose cultural apparatus is in no small measure intended exactly as a defiance of the surrounding society.

In terms of individual life careers, it might well be that a majority of the young people also in the more extreme parts of youth culture will eventually conform to more mainstream lifestyles. This might well be the lesson from many studies of earlier protest youth cultures during the post-war era. There is, however, one serious caveat to the present-day applicability of this knowledge. As discussed above, society has changed rapidly over the last 15 years with respect to the mechanisms whereby youth is absorbed into the labour market, and we now have staggering unemployment. It is obvious that we have, to some extent, a situation where "non-conforming" youth, together with poorly educated or those growing up in depressed areas will find themselves virtually excluded from working life as adults.

II.7 Structural paralysis and "handing-over"

Some of the features of the contemporary changes which have been described in this exposé occasionally combine into phenomena which on the social level might be called structural paralysis and on an individual level "handing over".

Structural paralysis stands for a situation where a social unit, such as a community or a neighbourhood, finds no effective ways of addressing its problems. Instances outside the unit control all the resources through which the unit would be able to improve. Authority is lodged in inaccessible political structures far removed, no facilities are available through which a local articulation of the unit's problems can be made, and no resources, economic or other, are easily identified through which the situation can be rectified. Things "happen" to the unit, they are not made to happen by the members of the unit. As far as the members of the unit are concerned, the social structure is "barren", there are no levers to pull through which the members of the unit can control what goes on.

On a more individual level, a somewhat similar situation is sometimes called "handing-over". This means that people leave important decisions concerning their lives to others, notably professionals in the caring and helping professions. There appear to be two significant causes to this phenomenon. One is that people are simply powerless to withstand the intrusion of professionals. The professionals, on the other hand, by virtue of their training and experience might well feel that they have superior knowledge about how children should be brought up, the family budget organised, etc. The powerlessness on the part of the clients, in a general sense occasioned by a lack of resources, economic and other, prohibits effective counter measures. Another reason for the handing-over phenomenon relates to what

almost amounts to a learning experience. People who have the result of their own judgement repeatedly sanctioned will at least in some circumstances eventually draw the conclusion that they cannot trust their own instincts, and that others "know better".

One consequence of the handing-over is that the responsibility for important areas of one's own or one's children's lives becomes removed from oneself, in one's own thinking. Examples of this kind are easily drawn from the spheres of education and health services, where the educational success of the children becomes the responsibility of the school and one's health the responsibility of the doctor or the hospital.

It should be added that the handing-over phenomenon can be a tempting way of handling the problems which one encounters, provided that a corps of professionals is ready to engage itself in assuming what to the client appears as a responsibility for the handling of the problem.

II.8 The consequences of international migration

Much of what has been said above is also applicable to migrants. However, it should be mentioned that international migration has resulted in a number of phenomena, some of which can be seen as extreme examples of the reasoning above, and some additional ones which should be mentioned here.

The decontextualisation, the homelessness, the changes in identity formation, structural paralysis and the handing-over are some of the concepts which may be of help when examining specific situations concerning migrants. Matters which also have to be considered when understanding the situation of international migrants have to include racism and bigotry, residential and occupational segregation, the formation of ethnic minorities among migrants and the special situation in which refugees might find themselves. Their legal status as well as their background in another culture than that of the receiving society are also features which have to be considered in this context.

Racism, bigotry and segregation are all factors which testify that our societies are not as open as we would like to think. To many migrants, they are virtually everyday experiences, felt to be hindrances to their ability to live decent lives. Some of what the immigrants experience in this regard must be understood partly as an attempt on the part of the members of the receiving society to "use" the immigrants for their own purposes in an absurd self-definatory and identity-strengthening process. By defining the immigrants as inferior, it is possible to define oneself as superior, and derive emotional gratification from this.

However, it should not be forgotten, that racism, bigotry and discrimination also exist as a consequence of no more or less than greed on the part of landlords, employers and others. Also, our governmental institutions may exhibit what has been labelled "institutional racism". This means, that eg modes of operation which have developed in more mono-cultural situations when continuing to function in multi-cultural situations get racialistic or

somewhat similar consequences. Examples of this are often drawn from schools, where eg text-books, unreflected modes of teaching and a host of other items serve to alienate the immigrant children.

The formation of minorities among migrants is a phenomenon which will have a number of significant consequences. One is that the migrants create contexts where they will be able to maintain, perhaps even develop, their own social life, and draw comfort and pleasure from each other. This observation is not belied by the fact, that one reason for this associative life often is a measure of exclusion from the receiving country. Another consequence is that it will be possible, for anyone who so chooses, to have access to a number of the concerns of migrants - the minority leaders often have as one of their prime tasks to voice the problems the minority members encounter in their dealings with the surrounding society and its members.

The situation of refugees have often been subsumed under more general discussions of immigrants. To a large extent this is a valid approach, but it must also be recognised that this is not helpful in all instances. Refugee groups often have a skill and educational profile which is different from labour migrants, and a special effort is often required to give these immigrants opportunities to use their education and training. If refugees (and other migrants) are not given credit for their background and training, and this has often been the case, a massive frustration is not unusual, with grave consequences for the wellbeing of the adults as well as the children. Experiences of torture and other forms of physical abuse are also matters which may require professional help (and if this can be provided by professionals from the same group who have been given working opportunities in the new country, so much the better).

One item which has been touched upon repeatedly in this essay is the uprooting of people. The migrants here often represent an extreme case. However, it should also be recognised that the legal framework in many countries often heavily contributes to further the insecurity on the part of the migrants. Residence and working permits as well as naturalisation rules should be considered also in this perspective.

Migrants come from cultural traditions which are different from those of the receiving countries. It is all to the better that there is a growing insight that the perspective that all "ours" is better and all "theirs" is worse is wrong for a variety of reasons. Increasingly, we have come to realise that we are all simply representatives of different traditions, and that sweeping value judgements have a foundation only in bigotry or worse. The issue, thus, is one of reciprocal humility towards each others' cultural traditions, and how they can be made to meet and enrich each other.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

In the preceding, an attempt has been made to delineate the most significant features of contemporary social and cultural changes in Europe. The variety of things which have been dealt with reflects the extraordinary complexity of the subject-matter. How, then, is it possible to formulate the implications for cultural and educational policies? There are two considerations which I feel justify the present attempt. One is a belief that the present situation forces a reconsideration of the type of educational and cultural policies and also of the training of educational and other staff charged with their implementation. The other is a belief that behind all the variety, there are similarities in the sense that well-considered cultural and educational policies will have implications in several fields simultaneously. (It should be noted here that when I use the concept cultural policy here, I am using the word culture in a way which differs from my earlier usage; here cultural policy stands for the generally recognised field of political and bureaucratic action, earlier culture was used to denote symbolic systems in which people's values, orientations and knowledge about themselves and the world is lodged.)

III.1 A necessary general trend

It is obvious that the variety which has been described in the foregoing necessitates reorientations in the ways in which we have often tended to shape and implement cultural and educational policies and actions. Usually, we have sought for generally applicable measures. Standardised solutions have made it possible to even out, to some extent, the differences in standards between country and city with respect to educational and cultural facilities. Likewise, this uniformity has made the educational and cultural institutional systems administratively manageable. This relates both to methods of funding and such items as teachers' qualifications and pupils' grades.

If we are to cope with the present situation, however, we will have to embark on a more daring course. A point has now been reached, where the difficulties to reconcile standardised solutions to the variety in the local communities, the local neighbourhoods and schools are often too obvious.

An excellent, and unfortunate, example of this is provided by the situation of migrants and their children. If we look at the school situation, we often find that even when the total resource situation is reasonably adequate, we still find that the provisions for migrant children are woefully inadequate. One part of the explanation relates to the mode of thinking which not infrequently prevails: teachers and school administrators presume that "solutions" recommended by central authorities are to be implemented. Often enough, the personnel will also feel that their responsibility ends here. What is required, however, in order to make the educational system truly responsive to the pupils' needs, must be a very creative approach by school personnel and administrators. As already mentioned, this creative approach has often been stifled by central dictates. Another part of the

explanation relates to a funding structure, which often earmarks the resources available for the schools to very specific purposes, thus making it often difficult to utilise the resources in an optimal manner.

There is a further danger in a continuation of the present approach which simply consists of there being a feeling that as long as the centrally issued directives have been fulfilled, the job is done - irrespective of whether the situation for the pupils concerned has changed or remained the same.

Therefore, in order to create the opportunity for local creativeness, there has to be a change in authority structures in the educational and cultural fields, also expressed in a more flexible funding structure. However, what is also required is a change in thinking. Part of this change must be achieved through a new method of personnel training. If the present training can be largely described as having a technological approach to many educational and cultural matters, a reorientation must occur where considerably more space must be given to training which stresses an understanding of social and cultural processes, perspectives as opposed to guidelines, sensitivity to social and cultural variation as seen in the skills and resources among the pupils as opposed to a uniformly defined mode of operation.

The example above relates to the school, but the same reasoning applies to other areas. What presently happens is that the centralised mode of operation, if this may be a permissible expression, upholds a general standard, a general goal, which is so unrelated to the actual situation, including the desires of those to which it addresses itself, that a real gulf is formed between the societal institutions and bureaucracies and the grassroot levels.

III.2 The grounding of experience

One result of the wide expansion of the educational efforts which has occurred during the post-war period has been that education now to many students is a very abstract exercise, far removed from their social situation and experiences. The educational system is considered by many as irrelevant and ill-related to their aspirations. It is out of step with the rest of the world in which the students live.

This observation has several significant implications. One is that the educational system ideally should have the support of, and be supportive of, what exists for the students outside the classroom. Thus, it should be possible to motivate the students as the relevance of participation in the educational system is easily demonstrated.

Another important consequence of the poor fit between the educational system and the rest of the students' world is that the students are unable to "ground" what they learn in the educational system in on-going everyday life. It is very unfortunate when a situation develops whereby the impact of the educational system is reduced, perhaps occasionally almost nullified, because of this.

This reasoning is applicable to both adult and child education. It is far too common that eg adult immigration courses and special educational offerings to immigrant children are experienced as of no significance for their future wellbeing, or, at best, simply a waste of time.

A particular case here is represented by language teaching to immigrants. There is, fortunately, now a growing insight among linguists and educationalists that a language, being just one part in the complex interchanges between people, cannot be taught without consideration of the situations in which language is used. Language teaching must thus have a basis in the situations in which migrants and migrant children use or will use the language they are to learn. The stress on language teaching, thus, moves from teaching language the way a language is taught in universities, where the language itself is the important point of orientation, to teaching language as part of a communicative competency which is recognised as a valuable asset by those being taught.

III.3 Educational and cultural policies and the meeting of people

As described above, one of the features of many changes in contemporary Europe is that people increasingly encounter each other in very specialised roles. It becomes increasingly rarer that people have the chance to present several sides of themselves to each other. We increasingly form our opinion of others from very narrow experiences. This also means that we open the doors for a degree of stereotyping of each other which would not be quite as possible if we had to get to know each other better or perhaps even had the chance to develop multi-stranded friendships. As it is, labels such as immigrant or those denoting a particular country of origin become loaded with negative connotations and provide the basis for discriminatory treatment if people had the opportunity, as it were, to "get to know each other", ie see each other perform in a variety of different situations.

This reasoning should have implications for cultural and educational policies: they should strive to provide opportunities for people to meet and present sides of their lives and abilities which in our society will otherwise often remain hidden. This is, more or less consciously, the insight which sometimes underpins "multicultural festivals" and similar events. However, real thought should go into developing the meeting of people as a general premise for educational and cultural policies.

III.4 Multicultural Europe

This whole essay has, in a way, dealt with multicultural Europe. Multicultural Europe is now the expression of both the meeting of people from different cultural traditions and the variety of cultural expressions emerging within the various national or regional cultural traditions. The challenge to those with the opportunity to define and implement cultural and educational policies is easily defined: to recognise the tremendous creative forces at play here, and provide the opportunity whereby they can become sources of unity and co-operation. Repression of or inattention to what this

cultural pluralism tells us about the conditions under which people live will only serve to alienate governors from governed, teacher from student, and person from person. This, however, cannot be what anyone desires. If the opposite is to become a reality, to a greater or lesser extent, it is to a considerable degree dependent upon whether a concerted effort is made to make our societal institutions responsive to the variety of social and cultural conditions now present all over Europe.

APPENDIX

Literature

There exists substantial literature about many of the items covered in this essay. The following references are thus not to be considered exhaustive. Instead, they may be regarded as a guide to the relevant literature. It should also be noted that I have not felt that references are needed for all sub-chapters.

International migration is a topic which has been covered by research in a number of sending and receiving countries. With respect to the demographic consequences, the Council of Europe through its Committee of Experts on Immigrant Populations has produced a valuable presentation in two parts, Immigrant populations and demographic development in the member states of the Council of Europe, written by Rinus Pennix (1983). During 1984, a comparative study by Tomas Hammar, Immigration policies in six European countries, will be published by the Cambridge University Press. It contains recent information on a number of different issues.

The treatment of the welfare state is inspired by several sources, including C Keyes Ethnic change (University of Washington Press, Seattle), which also contains the article by Fox, Aull and Cimino to which reference is made in the text. A D Smith's The ethnic revival in the modern world (Cambridge University Press 1981) should also be mentioned.

An interesting treatment of the debate over the family, although with a slant towards the US situation, is found in Berger P and Berger B. The war over the family, Anchor Press, 1983. Interesting work more related to the situation of women include E Sullerot (ed.), Le fait féminin, Fayard 1978, and U Prokop, Weiblicher Lebenzusammenhang, Suhrkamp, 1981. Much valuable information on female participation in the labour market is contained in Women and employment, OECD 1980.

E Allardt's book Att Vara, att ha, att älska (To have, to love, to be) came in 1975 (Argos Publishing). R Dahrendorf's Life chances, was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1979.

Section two in the essay, which deals with the implications of recent changes, draws on a wide body of literature. The organisation of the section does not quite parallel the division within the literature, which often deals with several of the sub-themes in the section. Valuable introductions to the mode of thinking advanced in the section are found in B Martin, A sociology of contemporary cultural change (Blackwell, 1981) and S Hall and T Jefferson, Resistance through rituals (Hutchinson, 1975). Identity is discussed in A Brittan, The privatised world (Routhledge and Kegan Paul, 1977). A somewhat different discussion is found in a number of articles in Actes de la recherche en science sociales, 1980:2, having identity as its theme.

No references will be given to section three, as the earlier material produced by the working group is far more exhaustive than would be possible here.